Agreement for tourism package in Southern States

2497. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Southern States of the country have signed an agreement to strengthen and facilitate tourist operation in four Southern States;

(b) if so, the details of the agreement; and

(c) whether Government are considering any new packages to improve the confidence of domestic and international Tourism?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Yes, Sir. A conference of Southern States Tourism Ministers and Tourism Secretaries was held in Kovalam in January 2002 to discuss various issues related to tourism industry in the country and particularly in South India.

(b) The Conference adopted the following resolutions unanimously in order to strengthen and facilitate tourist operations in the Southern States:

(1) Government of India should do away with Expenditure Tax. Correspondingly the State Government will reduce and cap luxury tax at 10% on actual rates realised.

(2) The recommendations regarding Zonal tourist permit should be implemented in all the Southern States comprising of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu. Pondicherry and Andhra Pradesh.

(3) Government of India may introduce Visa on arrival facility at all the South India airports.

(4) All requests from international carriers to land in Indian Airports and particularly in South India Airports should be given permission immediately to stimulate growth in tourism.

(5) The Government of India and the State Governments should immediately reinstate LTC facilities to companies should be given tax breaks to encourage domestic tourism.

(6) The Government of India and the State Government should take most urgent steps to reduce taxation to make the domestic travel competitive and comparable.

(c) The Department of Tourism, Government of India has formulated the following short term and long term plans to attract the foreign as well as domestic tourists:

(1) Positioning and maintaining tourism development as a National priority activity.

(2) Enhancing and maintaining the competitiveness of India as a tourism destination.

(3) Improving India's existing tourism products and expanding these to meet new market requirements.

(4) Creation of world class infrastructure.

(5) Developing sustained and effective market plans and programmes.

(6) Special thrust to rural and small segment tourism, and

(7) Attention to civilizational issues and issues pertaining to civic administration and good governance and also of social and cultural values.

Development of heritage properties in Gujarat

2498. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposals to develop heritage properties in Gujarat;

(b) if so, whether any survey has been conducted to select such heritage sites/locations in the State;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether any proposals are being discussed with the owners of heritage properties in Gujarat: and

(e) if so, the details thereof?